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ABSTRACT

As long as profit can be made from ignoring or cultivating the ignorance of working people, education for their children in the best sense will remain a difficult goal. This book delineates in three case studies how American myths of emancipation and upward mobility work as images of delusion. The frontier of space, the arena of sports, and the goal of employment, all essential elements in the discourse of reform, are used to illustrate the myth of rhetorical hope in American society. The teacher has been replaced by the user-friendly, standardized trainer/coach/cooperative facilitator who works with students so drained by consumerism that false consciousness cannot even grow. The book borrows from the language of everyday life and connects the substance of the critiques with an ethical discourse that focuses on the elimination of human suffering and the empowerment of working-class students. It also illuminates how "excellence" has become a code word to decouple learning from compassion and school success from social justice. (Contains 86 references.) (LMI)

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